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ABSTRACT

This report describes seven new national curriculum development programs that were featured in workshops at the 1973 convention of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Although most of the programs deal with the physical and social sciences, the programs stress a multidisciplinary approach. Four of the programs are intended for use at the high school level, two are designed for junior high or middle schools, and one can be applied on any instructional level from kindergarten through college. (JG)

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Research
Ideas
Practice

CURRICULUM **Report**

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AT THE EDGE AND STILL CUTTING

Notes on Some Very New National Curriculum Development Projects

Explaining This CR

Reading about new ideas is never quite as satisfying as hearing them described and demonstrated and questioned in a face-to-face setting. But reading is better than no contact at all. Also, a little reading frequently is a helpful supplement to a "show and tell" session. This CR, then, is intended to assist two groups of secondary school administrators and their associates: (1) those whose plans for professional improvement in 1973 included attending the NASSP Convention in Dallas in early February, and (2) those who couldn't attend.

To be more specific, among the options available to 1973 Convention goers was participation in one or more demonstration workshops, each of which featured one of several comparatively new national curriculum development programs. But as in previous years, time for each workshop session had to be limited--only 90 minutes. Furthermore, the conflicting and competitive demands and opportunities normal to every convention seemed certain to make it difficult for most people to make as much use of these Curriculum Learning Center options as they would like.

So, by way of saving a bit of the scarce workshop time, each project was asked to prepare a brief statement that would answer a few of the questions that almost always are asked about it. But why not develop these statements so they would be informative to those who were unable to attend some of the workshops, or perhaps got to none at all? And, finally, it was evident that, if these materials could be helpful to those who were in Dallas but did not get to a workshop, they ought to be equally valuable to those who were confined to their schools the first week in February.

That's how CR, Vol. 2, No. 2, came to be.

Few references are made in this CR to schools or other sources where a given curriculum program can be seen in operation or where there are staff members with whom one could correspond. In every instance, however, at least one follow-up point has been named.

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Characterizing the Projects

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Although the substantial and significant outcomes of the major national curriculum projects of the 60's have by no means been fully exploited, to be true to its Convention theme, UPDATE '73, NASSP chose for this year's workshops a group of projects that are comparatively recent arrivals on the educational scene and, consequently, little known. There are at least two persuasive reasons for giving them public notice, even those in only embryonic state:

(1) They are evidence that, contrary to a widespread belief, there is still a place and need for broad-based curriculum development activities; and

(2) In content and concept they differ enough from the traditional--or even the almost current--to be worth the on-going attention of thoughtful and alert instructional leaders.

There are two other characteristics of these newer projects worth noting, as marks of these projects in particular and also as features that are likely to mark other instructional designs in the years ahead.

- All of these curriculum plans are multi-disciplinary in their focus and in the subject-matter employed for teaching and learning. In fact, in some cases content and methods are only distantly related to traditional content areas and practices.

- The programs described here deal much more directly with man (a real person) and his or her needs, problems, and conditions of existence than do most secondary school courses with which we are familiar. The temptation to infer that, because of this concern with the realities of life, these courses are less academically decent or less intellectually challenging is to be resisted as unsound and unsupportable.

The Projects, One by One

Each of these project descriptions opens with the name of the project or course, which may not in every case be the final title. Reading on, you will find the name of the university or other educational center where the project is based and the person to whom inquiries about the project should be sent. Other contact points, if any, will be noted somewhere in the text.

EXPLORING HUMAN NATURE Education Development Center, 15 Mifflin Place, Cambridge, Mass. 02138. Peter B. Dow, director.

This full-year course for high school juniors and seniors, which is currently being developed, brings together the perspectives and conceptual tools of the social and biological sciences to help students understand themselves and their behavior, their relationships with others, and the society in which they find themselves; to help them to see that human behavior follows orderly patterns; and to aid them in acquiring greater sensitivity and appreciation for human diversity.

In approach, the course is cross-disciplinary, cross-species, and cross-cultural. Through these methods students will begin to understand that different aspects of

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human behavior are best understood by combining theoretical stances and strategies from different disciplines.

Through varied learning activities ranging from the analysis of case studies and research findings to interviewing and other forms of field research, students explore four aspects of the human condition universal to all people, which are specified in the titles of the units listed below.

The basic vehicle for exploring these aspects of living is asking questions--some that yield to research, others still as yet unanswerable, and still others perennially in need of reconsideration. In this manner it is hoped that students will acquire increasing respect for inquiry as a legitimate activity and a tolerance for delayed response and even for ambiguity. Here, now, are the four themes of the course and the questions used to develop them.

I. The Roots of Human Behavior

How animal is man?

Is there more to human behavior than meets the eye?

What does our evolutionary past tell us about our behavior today?

How different are males and females?

Why do people love babies?

Comment: We seek in this first unit to help students understand that culture does not operate in a vacuum, but that it is, in part, patterned by biological forces. This interaction is identified early in the course and is emphasized throughout.

II. The Family and Its Social Context

What is a family?

Why do families in different cultures take different forms?

How does the form of a family shape an individual's behavior?

Comment: The focus here has moved from the biological basis of some behavioral systems to their patterning in cultures with a specific purpose students quickly recognize as important--the survival of the human infant.

III. Coming of Age: Managing Maturity

Why do children become adults?

How is adulthood defined in different cultures?

What do we mean by "adolescence"?

Comment: Consideration of the family characterizes all three of these first units, though the approach varies. In Unit III the emphasis is on the ways in which all societies, simple or complex, must in some fashion regulate transition from being a child to being an adult.

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IV. Cooperation, Conflict, and Competition

How are social roles determined? In our society? Elsewhere?

What explains cooperation and competition?

Why do social patterns change?

Comment: In this final unit students are called upon to deal with issues outside the family and neighborhood; how individuals and groups play out their relationships in different contexts. They are also encouraged to ask how the present world might be changed by human thought and action.

Exploring Human Nature is currently being used on a pilot basis with about 1500 students. It is expected that one of the units, "Coming of Age," will be ready for general distribution by next fall. A comprehensive prospectus describing the course in detail can be obtained by writing to Peter Dow at EDC.

HUMAN SCIENCES: A Multidisciplinary Program for the Middle School, Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, P.O. Box 930, Boulder, Col. 80302. James Robinson, project director.

Human Sciences for the Middle School began with the concerns expressed by middle and junior high school teachers about the children they teach. A series of conferences were held under BSCS sponsorship to explore these concerns in more detail. The outcome was a recommendation that a curriculum new in subject-matter and new in approach to learning was needed. It was suggested, further, that it would be more exciting to them as teachers to start from the beginning and invent an instructional plan than to spend time reworking a conventional curriculum. Plans were made to go ahead, and the National Science Foundation agreed to support at least the pilot activities.

Work on the project began in earnest in the spring of 1971, when three more conferences were held that brought together anthropologists, biologists, economists, sociologists, political scientists, geographers, psychologists, and teachers to start identifying the concepts and knowledge basic to helping boys and girls in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades understand the environmental and bio-social environment in which they operate.

The 135 topics thus identified as potentially significant for a 3-year human sciences program for middle schoolers can be grouped under three major conceptual themes: continuity and change; competition, accommodation, and cooperation; and equality and inequality.

The first writing conference for the new curriculum was held in November 1971, and this group was reconvened in February 1972. Finally, an 8-week workshop program this past summer produced the first module, which is currently being tested in a number of schools. As this indicates, the curriculum is to be organized in a series of modules--six for each of the three school years--that reflect the interests and concerns of emerging adolescents. (As used here, a module, in contrast to a unit of study, "is an independent learning package developed around a significant problem area and flexible enough to permit entry at many points and to serve a wide range of student interests, abilities, and learning styles.)

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The summer's workshop produced what can be called the project's model module. It's presently titled HUMANSELF, and classroom testing of it began in October. From this testing will come, sometime this spring, a revised demonstration module. The plan is to offer this demonstration module to schools on a cost basis so that many schools that are interested in the Human Sciences program can try it out in a small way in the near future. (Commercial distribution of the complete course is, obviously, some years off.)

It is to be noted that although Human Sciences is being designed so as to be a complete 3-year program or course, each module is an independent learning package and can be placed in an existing course to replace a conventional section of the work.

HUMANSELF, the model module, consists of 13 sets of activities, starting with "Kaleidoscope: Similarities and Differences," which is designed to stimulate interest in the other 12. These other 12 are:

What is normal?

The self-study booklet (a diary)

Who is normal?

How long is life?

Who eats what?

How much alike are we?

Are we like other organisms?

What do you think of that?

Family differences and similarities

Who lives where?

How do colors affect you?

What's in the bag?

The creators of the module suggest that, because of middle schoolers' characteristic interest in self, "What is normal?" and the "self-study booklet" appear to be the logical entry points to the module. But the beginning can be made at whatever point or points the teacher believes to be most appropriate to the students' interests and abilities.

The Human Sciences project publishes a progress report in newsletter form twice or more a year, with the next one due shortly. To be put on the mailing list for this and subsequent progress reports, send your name and address to Mr. Robinson. And if you would like to have a chance to use HUMANSELF in its demonstration module form next fall, let him know about that, too.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES: A Curriculum for People. Environmental Studies Project, P.O. Box 1559, Boulder, Col. 80302. Robert Samples, project director.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (ES) is like the two other programs that have been described in that it also is multidisciplinary, but it is different from them in one obvious way: the materials this program has created can be used from kindergarten through graduate school in social studies, language arts, mathematics, science, and any other discipline or subject found in a school's curriculum.

These materials currently consist of two groups of assignment cards and ESSENSE, a teacher's "non-guide." Since these are designed for the teacher, only one collection of cards is necessary for a given classroom or learning group.

Each card contains an ambiguous proposal to the student that he or she go out into the surrounding environment--school plant, neighborhood, home, etc.--and actively

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explore some element of that environment. This ambiguity, for one thing, forces the student to make significant decisions about how he carries out the assignment. Since the student is making such decisions, the "answers" he brings back are correct because they are based on his personal interpretation of the assignment. This success inevitably results in growth of self-esteem and self-image, a fundamental objective of ES.

To illustrate the kind of "action" proposed, one card reads

■ Go outside with a tape recorder and

- find and bring back sounds you like and dislike
- find and bring back morning, day, and night sounds
- record--traffic

  --school announcements

  --birds

  --shop sounds

  --police whistle

A note to teachers on this card says, "Tape recorders are tools, not museum pieces. Let the kids use them!"

Packets 1 and 2 (Set A @ $10) contain 50 cards, each of which is an invitation to the student to investigate some aspect of his physical surroundings. Set B (also $10) is made up of Packet 3--25 interpersonal cards designed to develop awareness of the emotions and motivations that characterize human relationships--and Pact 4--40 cards that provide extensions of the activities proposed in Set A.

During the past two years, these materials have been tested in a formal way with inner-city students in nine major cities across the country. In addition, several thousand teachers are using the materials in suburban and rural schools, and they are also being used in teacher-preparation and inservice programs.

Evaluation of results thus far are approximate, based as they are on observations in pilot classrooms and feedback from teachers, students, and administrators. An outcome consistently observed is an unusual level of enthusiasm and excitement for learning. By no means incidentally, many students in this program discover the need for improving their control of traditional academic skills--reading, communication, mathematics--and set about meeting this need on a self-starting basis.

Additional information about Environmental Studies and the sets of assignment cards are available from the project headquarters in Boulder. We call your attention especially to a newsletter published jointly by ES and its parent body, the Earth Science Teacher Preparation Project. It's named SENSORSHEET. This is a publication out of the ordinary; you could properly say it's unique. And it costs absolutely nothing to get on the mailing list. Try it; you'll like it.

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INDIVIDUALIZED SCIENCE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM (ISIS) Educational Research Institute, 415 N. Monroe St., Tallahassee, Fl. 32301. Ernest Burkman, project director.

The ISIS project is now taking its first steps in the direction of creating a 3-year instructional system that will individualize the learning and teaching of science at the senior high school level. Preparation of a proposal for the undertaking was done during the 1971-72 school year. With funding made available in October 1972, ISIS is now in an organizational year when primary attention is being given to the selection and statement of instructional goals and the development and testing of prototype modules.

With this project new-born and still in swaddling clothes, there isn't very much that can be said about what the program is at the moment. However, the conditions and desires that led to its conception are indicators of what it will become in a few years. And enough preliminary work has been done to provide illustrations of some features of the mature system.

■ Reasons for Action Among the dissatisfactions with the present scene that the planning group specified were these:

(1) Science teaching is mostly group-centered and teacher-directed. Consequently, few significant provisions are made for learning-related differences among students.

(2) Existing high school instructional materials tend to be inflexible. Having been designed for use in year-long courses, they require students and teachers to commit themselves to a particular sequence for a school year.

(3) "Pure" science tends to be overemphasized at the expense of applied science and technology, and for the most part the social implications of science and technology are ignored.

■ Changes to Be Made Here are a few, and by no means all, of the characteristics the project staff intends to build into the new system:

(a) Flexibility and adaptability will be promoted by designing the 3-year program as a series of one- to three-week program units;

(b) Most of these program units will be cross-disciplinary, and these units will frequently deal with real-world human and social problems;

(c) The program units will be as independent of each other as possible so that a teacher will have many options in ordering them;

(d) The units are being designed for individual student use with guidance and other assistance provided by the teacher.

■ Examples of Preliminary Materials While it's not possible to present here complete examples of projected ISIS learning/teaching materials--too soon, and not enough space, anyway--a few snippets from the Project's working documents will give some sense of their flavor and texture.

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A Few First-Year Program Module Titles

Why You're You	How to Grow House Plants
Home Electrical Repairs	Local Geology
Sound of Music	Diet and Dieting
Human Birth	Strength Tests

Samples of Module Performance Objectives

Predict possible second-generation offspring from known parental traits

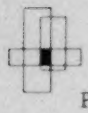
Explain the origin of the rainbow-type colors produced by an engagement ring

Describe the general effects of psychedelics, stimulants, and depressants

Initial Activity for Module, "Sound of Music"

After opening music on tape, listen to same not played by several different instruments. If possible, observe wave forms on oscilloscope. Include same note from tuning fork and signal generator. Define sweep period for scope. Determine frequency of fundamental. With scope and microphone test student ability to hit note with voice or whistle.

Schools or teachers who are interested in learning more about this project as it moves ahead and, especially, those who would be interested in becoming involved in the development/testing process are encouraged to write to Professor Swartz.



THE PADUA PROJECT: A Student-Centered English Curriculum. Padua Franciscan High School, Parma, Ohio. Louis M. Papes, chairman, English Department.

Professional introspection four years ago led the Department of English to question the "what" and the "how" of English education at Padua. We discovered that the majority of our students did not read for their own enjoyment; that they found writing essentially a chore; and that they virtually despised language study through grammar. In short, we discovered that our English program was not really making a significant contribution to the educational process of our students; we had to accept the fact that we were falling short of our primary goals.

In consequence, the Department gave itself three assignments:

- define the student at Padua,
- investigate the unique talents of members of the Department,
- determine what "English" is and how it can best be taught/learned.

The resulting description of the adolescent became the fulcrum of the curricular objectives developed in the summer of 1969.

Padua Project Emerges From this beginning grew what we now call the Padua Project, a program based on (1) student-centered performance objectives in the communication arts; (2) reputable adolescent and adult literature substituted for the classics; (3) elimination of "grammar" but not language study; (4) acceptance of the readiness

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principle in the composition process; and (5) inclusion of media study. The teacher has become a facilitator of learning rather than an instructor.

The full impact of this new curriculum was first felt by the junior and senior classes, as the traditional year-long, anthology-based courses gave way to semester electives in Modern Fiction, Short Fiction and Poetry, Mass Media, World Literature, Pre-College Composition, and Drama. Since then these "core courses" have been expanded to include: Imaginative Literature, Sports in Literature, Classical Backgrounds, Business English, and Nonfiction.

Next Came Open Classrooms In the fall of 1971, with the help of a grant from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, a full-scale experiment in applying open classroom concepts to the English program for 9th and 10th graders was initiated.

The general objectives of the Padua Project Open Classroom English Program are: to create an "experimental learning" atmosphere; to provide students with a discovery-performance mode of learning; to provide students with a number of roughly sequenced learning activities (alternatives) from which to choose; to eliminate the regimen of the traditional classroom; to strive for an atmosphere conducive to interpersonal relations; to lessen tension and pressures generally associated with school; to capitalize on the adolescent's basic need to be an individual and independent of adults, while at the same time recognizing his reliance on the peer group.

The classrooms were furnished with round tables, chairs, game tables, independent study carrels, carpeted "rap area"--attractively arranged rooms for the student. Over 1,000 books, hundreds of magazines, puzzles, games, tape recorders, scissors, posterboard, glue, cameras, projectors, slides were provided. Each class had a member of the professional staff and one or two juniors or seniors who served as teaching assistants (with academic credit). And this fall two free paperback libraries were opened providing all students with over 3,000 additional popular titles in adolescent and young adult reading.

Alternative Learning Activities Central Alternatives are at the heart of Padua's open classrooms. Students are given between eight and twelve alternatives of varying lengths and descriptions for each unit (a unit lasts from five to eight days). The student decides what he will do, when he will do it, and with whom. The choices are his and he must follow through. Students are given the option to do something other than the teacher-prepared alternatives, but they must record that choice and describe it. As each learning activity is completed, the student reacts to the learning experience by recording his reactions in his "log."

Enlarged Opportunities for Upper Classmen The Foundation grant has also made it possible to create a new program at the junior-senior level. To complement the existing Core Course Electives, a series of Performance Electives were developed. (It may seem unfair to imply that performance is not called for in the Core Courses as well, for such is not the case. The nomenclature was selected to indicate that these new semester courses emphasize doing and performing in the communication arts. The present Performance Electives are: Filmmaking, Photography, Mass Media, Oral Communication, Creative Writing, Journalism, Drama Workshop, and Advanced Composition. In the year and a half, students selecting these options have produced hundreds of sound-slide shows, films, a literary magazine, videotape programs, and a host of other things and activities that have made these genuine performances.

Inquiries about the Padua Project and visitors at the school are most welcome.

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PHYSICAL SCIENCE II (PSII) Physical Science Group, Newton College, 885 Centre St., Newton, Mass. 02159. Uri Haber-Schaim, project director.

At first glance, PSII may seem out of place in this discussion of curriculum projects which, it was said at the outset, are comparatively new and are substantially interdisciplinary in character with strong infusions of social-problem materials, for PSII materials are now in published form and the interdisciplinary, social problems features seem minimal. It was decided to accommodate to these inconsistencies, because although PSII is not precisely new it is not widely known. Moreover, the idea of a 2-year physical science sequence is, as changes in curriculum thinking go, quite new and still near enough the cutting edge to be somewhat threatened by the perils of pioneer life.

Quickly, a few facts about the origins of PSII. Following widespread acceptance of Introductory Physical Science (IPS), which was aimed at 8th or 9th graders, the Physical Science Group--now based at Newton College, but for some years a part of the Educational Development Center--decided to go to work on a sequel. What is now PSII was piloted nationwide for four years. The first commercial edition of the course was published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., in the spring of 1972.

As an extension of IPS, PSII has been developed with the needs, interests, and maturity levels of 9th and 10th graders principally in mind.

Why Two Years of Physical Science? More specifically, why follow IPS with PSII before going to another science course such as biology, earth science, or chemistry? In IPS, students acquire general learning skills in reasoning, working in the laboratory, analyzing experimental data, reading scientific material, and communicating their findings to others. This is accomplished by restricting the amount of subject matter and allowing the students to study it actively in depth rather than be merely exposed to it. All the material in the IPS course is fundamental: the characteristic properties of matter, methods of separating substances, the laws of compound formation, and an introduction to the atomic model of matter.

There are, however, other topics that are basic to further studies in science. Two of utmost importance are (1) the connection between atoms and electric charge, and (2) the various forms and changes in energy culminating in the law of conservation of energy. These are the main topics taken up in PSII. (It is important to keep in mind that PSII is not a combination of or a replacement for customary physics and chemistry courses, though it is evident that these courses would have to be modified substantially to take advantage of the deeper preparation that students who had taken the 2-year sequence would have had.)

Many high school students, we know, do not continue their studies in science as far as physics or chemistry or other courses at the same level, because of the rigor of these courses or because of, to them, the more attractive learning opportunities that other fields offer. For such students, clearly, PSII would round out their general education in science.

But more important, modern courses in biology, earth science, and other technical sciences require, if their full value is to be realized, a fairly sophisticated background in energetics and the ability to apply its principles to complex systems. PSII will provide that necessary foundation.

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■ But Where to Put It? There is currently no obvious slot in the curriculum for the two-year physical science sequence we are advocating. Nonetheless, within the existing structure the IPS/PSII combination can provide the base for a variety of science patterns. For example, the chart shows three possible patterns that might be followed in the case of students who do not plan to take physics or chemistry. (In this chart and in the discussion, we have used mainly conventional course names, but obviously the arguments and arrangements apply equally well to non-conventional programs, such as those described elsewhere in these pages.)

Grade 8	Life-Earth Science	IPS	IPS
9	IPS	PSII	PSII
10	PSII/Biology	Biology/Earth	Biology/Earth
11	Biology/PSII	Earth/Biology	Technical Science
12	--	--	--

The sequences shown here are but a few of the many ways in which a variety of science offerings can be combined to give students many alternatives to select from.

■ And What about the Teacher? Since adequate teacher preparation is one of the keys to the successful implementation of PSII, a program of local workshops has been organized to provide training for teachers implementing PSII. These local workshops conducted through the combined efforts and funding of Physical Science Group, Prentice-Hall, and local school districts are designed primarily for teachers who are teaching the course for the first time. Assistance in organizing a workshop or in answering curriculum organization problems in science is available from the Physical Science Group.

Inquiries about the program should be sent to the Physical Science Group, but information about schools in your area using IPS/PSII materials should be directed to the publisher, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632.

INTERMEDIATE SCIENCE CURRICULUM STUDY, Florida State University, 415 North Monroe St., Tallahassee, Fl. 32301. Adrian Lovell, administrative associate.

Like PSII, ISCS may seem out of place here because it, too, is a going concern. And going in a big way, for by last fall commercial editions of the materials for all three grade levels of this junior high school program had been published, and an estimated half-million youngsters in more than a thousand schools were involved in the program. But--and an important "but"--the project staff continue to warn schools that taking on the ISCS program is a much more demanding commitment than just adopting another textbook series. The response that the ISCS group is making to the obvious need for teacher inservice assistance is the novel element that earns a place for ISCS in this collection of "cutting edge" projects.

■ Individualized Teacher Preparation The core of this new ISCS undertaking is the development of a number of Individualized Teacher Preparation modules designed for inservice use at the local school level. That is to say, if teachers are to be able to implement individualized learning on the part of their students, it seems logical that they will be best prepared for this new role by a training program that is itself individualized.

In addition to wanting to give teachers direct experience with this new style of learning, the Project wants to provide a mechanism that local school systems can

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use to assist teachers who are moving toward the individualizing of their own teaching--whether it be in ISCS classes or in some other curriculum context.

■ Two Types of Modules There are two basic kinds of modules in the ITP plan: one group is content oriented, while the other group--called "teaching strategy modules"--deals specifically with the methodology of individualization and with teaching processes characteristic of an individualized classroom setting.

Each of the ITP modules is essentially independent of the others. Each one carries its own performance objectives and related self-evaluation activities. Each module contains both "core" and "excursion" material to provide teachers the opportunity to do different kinds of things and to satisfy varying personal needs. And, of course, the modular design of this inservice program permits each teacher/learner to proceed at her or his optimum rate.

■ Development Plans It is expected that by the end of this coming summer a complete set of modules for Levels I and II (grades 7 and 8 approx.) will be available. At the moment, the total module program geared to ISCS Level I is ready in authorized publisher's editions. Four of these are content-specific, another four have to do with teaching strategies.

The four strategy modules now available from the publisher (Silver Burdett Co., Morristown, N.J.) are titled

- Rationale for Individualization
- Classroom Organization
- Questioning
- Your Student's Role

Two others--Evaluating and Reporting Progress and Individualizing Objective Testing--are now being used in selected schools in experimental editions and are expected to be ready for commercial distribution by the end of the summer of 1973.

■ Making Contact Where you write for further information depends on the help you want.

√ For general information about the ISCS program, write to the Project itself.

√ To purchase either ISCS classroom materials or ITP modules, write to ISCS Project Manager, Silver Burdett Co., Morristown, N.J. 07960.

√ For information about schools in your region that are using the ISCS materials, also write to Silver Burdett Co.

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